

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) A method for anonymously and confidentially determining contraparties to a transaction and notifying an authorized representative of the contraparties to contact the contraparties in order to consummate a transaction, comprising the steps of: receiving indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the indications of interest are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system, each indication of interest involving a transfer of a specific item; anonymously comparing indications of interest received from potential transferees with indications of interest received from potential transferors within the central processing system to determine whether a match has occurred; determining contraparties to a transaction based on said determination of whether a match has occurred; notifying the authorized representative of the contraparties that a match has occurred between the contraparties; providing contacting means to the authorized representative to allow the authorized representative to contact the contraparties so that a transaction can be consummated between the contraparties, wherein the authorized representative notifies each contraparty of the match at the same time, and no contraparty receives notice of the match before another contraparty; and consummating the transaction between the contraparties through direct consummation by the authorized representative and the contraparties.
2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of an equity security.
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a debt security.
4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a derivative security.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.
7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred in said comparing step but which is transmitted to a matched contraparty during said consummating the transaction step to assist in consummation by the contraparties.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any price per unit limits established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor are satisfied.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable total values of the transaction established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, are satisfied.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable number of units established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, is satisfied.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said providing step also includes providing contacting means directly to the contraparties.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step unless all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step even though all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferee is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferee makes a good faith deposit.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferor is not received into the central processing system unless the potential

transferor makes a minimum firm commitment.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of reporting the consummation and terms of the transaction to the central processing system.

18. (Currently amended) A method for anonymously and confidentially determining counterparties to a transaction and introducing authorized representatives of each respective counterparty to each other in order for the authorized representatives to consummate a transaction, comprising the steps of: receiving indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the indications of interest are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system, each indication of interest involving a transfer of a specific item; anonymously comparing indications of interest received from potential transferees with indications of interest from potential transferors within the central processing system to determine whether a match has occurred; determining counterparties to a transaction based on said determination of whether a match has occurred; notifying the counterparties and their respective authorized representatives that a match has occurred between the counterparties, wherein each counterparty is notified of the match at the same time, and no counterparty receives notice of the match before another counterparty; providing contacting means to each of the authorized representatives to allow the authorized representatives of the counterparties to contact each other so that a transaction can be consummated between the counterparties; and consummating the transaction between the counterparties through direct consummation by the authorized representatives of the counterparties.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of an equity security.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a debt security.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a derivative security.

22. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.

23. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, at least one of the received indications of

interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred in said comparing step but which is transmitted to the authorized representatives during said consummating the transaction step to assist in consummation by the contraparties.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any price per unit limits established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor are satisfied.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable total values of the transaction established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, are satisfied.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable number of units established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, is satisfied.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein contacting means for the authorized representatives are also disclosed directly to the respective contraparties in said providing step.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step unless all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step even though all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferee is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferee makes a good faith deposit.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferor is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferor makes a minimum firm commitment.

34. (Original) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of reporting the consummation and terms of the transaction to the central processing system.

35. (Currently amended) A method for anonymously and confidentially determining contraparties to a transaction and providing contacting means between the contraparties in order to allow them to consummate a transaction, comprising the steps of: receiving indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the indications of interest are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system, each indication of interest involving a transfer of a specific item; anonymously comparing indications of interest received from potential transferees with indications of interest from potential transferors within the central processing system to determine whether a match has occurred; determining contraparties to a transaction based on said determination of whether a match has occurred; notifying each of the contraparties to a transaction that a match has occurred between the contraparties, wherein each contraparty is notified of the match at the same time, and no contraparty receives notice of the match before another contraparty; providing contacting means to each of the contraparties to a transaction to allow the contraparties to contact each other to consummate their transaction; and consummating the transaction between the contraparties through direct consummation by the contraparties.

36. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of an equity security.

37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a debt security.

38. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a derivative security.

39. (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.

40. (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein at least one of the received

indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred in said comparing step but which is transmitted to a matched contraparty during said consummating the transaction step to assist in consummation by the contraparties.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any price per unit limits established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor are satisfied.

44. (Previously presented) The method of claim 40, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable total values of the transaction established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, are satisfied.

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 41, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable number of units established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, is satisfied.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step unless all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step even though all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferee is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferee makes a good faith deposit.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferor is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferor makes a minimum firm commitment.

50. (Original) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of reporting the consummation and terms of the transaction to the central processing system.

51. (Currently amended) An information management system for confidentially determining counterparties to a transaction and introducing them and/or their agents to each other in order to allow them to consummate the transaction, comprising: means for receiving indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the indications of interest are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system; means for confidentially and anonymously comparing the received indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors to determine whether a match has occurred, and thus whether counterparties to a transaction have been identified; ~~and~~ means for informing identified counterparties that a match has occurred between the counterparties, wherein the information management system informs each counterparty of the match at the same time, and no counterparty is informed of the match before another counterparty; and means for providing contact between the identified counterparties so that further action may be taken by the counterparties to consummate their mutually desired transaction.

52. (Currently amended) A secure system for the trading of transferable commodities, including: a network, including a secure station and a plurality of remote user locations having respective user identities and communicatively linked to the secure station for data transmission between the secure station and the user locations; a memory at the secure station for storing user data and for storing transaction data in the form of multiple prospective transaction entries received from the user locations, each of the entries including a transferable item indication and a transaction side indication identifying one of two opposing transaction sides; a search component operatively coupled to the memory, said search component performing a comparison of the stored entries with respect to the transferable item indications and the transaction side indications and, based on said comparison, to select sets of two or more of the stored entries as matching entries having the same transferable item indication and together including transaction side indications identifying the opposing transaction sides; a message sending component operatively coupled to the search component and to the memory and, in response to the selection of each said set of matching entries, generating a prospective transaction message including the transaction indication corresponding to each of the matching entries, and further providing the prospective transaction message to the user locations associated with said corresponding user identities, wherein the secure system notifies each user identity associated with the matching entry of the match at the same time, and no user identity associated with the matching entry receives notice of the match before another user identity associated with the matching entry, thus to facilitate an interaction among users associated with the user locations to complete a transaction involving the transferable item, wherein the users interact with each other to complete the transaction; and a data security component for preventing knowledge of any given prospective transaction entry,

even if unmatched, stored in the memory except by (i) the user identity corresponding to the given entry; and (ii) the user identities corresponding to the other entries in any of said sets of entries that includes the given entry.

53. (Previously presented) The system of claim 52 wherein: said message sending component provides the prospective transaction message substantially simultaneously to the user locations associated with said corresponding user identities.

54. (Previously presented) The system of claim 52 further including: a menu for enabling users to select transferable item indications corresponding to different types of transferable items.

55. (Original) The system of claim 54 wherein: said menu is stored in the memory.

56. (Original) The system of claim 52 wherein: the data security component includes a plurality of user pages maintained at the secure station, each of the user pages being associated with and accessible only by one of the users.

57. (Previously presented) The system of claim 52 wherein: each of the prospective transaction entries includes a further indication selected from a group of further indications consisting of: an amount indication designating an amount of the transferable item corresponding to the transferable item indication; a price indication designating an acceptable price or an acceptable price range; and a time limit indication.

58. (Previously presented) The system of claim 57 wherein the further indication is an amount indication, and further includes: an apportionment component, responsive to the selection of a set of matching entries that includes at least two entries having the same transaction side, for apportioning the designated amount of the transferable item among the user identities corresponding to the given transaction side.

59. (Original) The system of claim 57 wherein: the memory includes an active segment for storing prospective transaction entries with none of said further indications and for storing entries including further indications that are satisfied; and a suspended segment for storing prospective transaction entries including a further indication which is not satisfied; wherein the secure station further includes an entry monitoring component operatively associated with the active and suspended segments, for repeatedly monitoring the entries that include a further indication, to determine whether that further indication is satisfied; and wherein said search component performs said comparison only upon the entries stored in the active segment of the memory.

60. (Previously presented) The system of claim 59 wherein: the memory further includes a

pending segment for storing prospective transaction entries designated as pending by the corresponding users, and a means for shifting an entry from the pending segment to the active segment responsive to a signal from the corresponding user location activating the entry.

61. (Original) The system of claim 52 further including: a status designation component enabling each user to alternatively designate a prospective transaction entry as active or pending; wherein the memory includes an active memory segment for storing entries designated active, and an inactive segment for storing entries designated as pending; and means for transferring an entry from one of said segments to the other in response to a change in the designation.

62. (Currently amended) A process for the trading of transferable commodities, including: receiving, from a plurality of remote user locations, user information including user identities, and transaction information in the form of prospective transaction entries, each of the entries including a transferable item indication and a transaction side indication identifying one of two opposing transaction sides; storing the user information and the prospective transaction entries to a memory; searching the memory to perform a comparison of the stored entries with respect to the transferable item indications and the transaction side indications; based on said comparison, selecting matching entries to form sets of two or more of the matching entries having the same transferable item indication and together including transaction side indications identifying the opposing transaction sides; in response to selecting each of the sets of entries, generating a prospective transaction message including the transaction indication corresponding to each of the matching entries, and providing the prospective transaction message to the user locations associated with the corresponding user identities, notifying each user identity associated with the matching entry of the match at the same time, with no user identity associated with the matching entry receiving notice of the match before another user identity associated with the matching entry, wherein the associated users contact one another toward a completion of a transaction involving the transferable item; and preventing knowledge of any given prospective transaction entry, even if unmatched, stored in the memory except by (i) the user identity corresponding to the given entry; and (ii) the user identities corresponding to the other entries in any of said sets of entries that includes the given entry.

63. (Previously presented) The process of claim 62 wherein: said providing the prospective transaction message includes providing said message substantially simultaneously to the user locations associated with the corresponding user identities.

64. (Original) The process of claim 62 further including: prior to receiving the prospective transaction entries from a given user, authorizing the given user based on the given user's meeting of predetermined qualification requirements.

65. (Original) The process of claim 62 wherein: said restricting access includes maintaining at the secure location a plurality of user pages, each user page personalized to and accessible only by an associated one of the user locations.

66. (Previously presented) The process of claim 62 wherein each of the prospective transaction entries further optionally includes a condition, and the process further includes: identifying the prospective transaction entries that includes a condition, and monitoring each of the entries so identified to determine whether the associated condition is satisfied.

67. (Previously presented) The process of claim 62 wherein: at least a portion of the prospective transaction entries include an amount indication associated with the transferable item indication, and the process further includes: responsive to the selection of a set that includes at least two entries with the same transaction side indication, apportioning the transferable item among the users indicating said same side of the transaction.

68. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of an equity security.

69. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a debt security.

70. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a derivative security.

71. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.

72. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.

73. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

74. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred, but which is transmitted to a matched contraparty to assist in consummation by the counterparties.

75. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein said means for providing contact includes providing contact directly between the contraparties.

76. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor unless all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

77. (Previously presented) The system of claim 51, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor even though all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

78. (Currently amended) A method for anonymously and confidentially determining contraparties to a transaction and notifying the contraparties in order to allow them to consummate a transaction, comprising the steps of: receiving indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the indications of interest are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system, each indication of interest involving a transfer of a specific item and representing a non-firm expression of potential interest in transacting said item; anonymously comparing indications of interest received from potential transferees with indications of interest from potential transferors within the central processing system to determine whether a match has occurred; determining contraparties to a transaction based on said determination of whether a match has occurred; and notifying each of the contraparties to a transaction that a match has occurred between the contraparties so that the contraparties may consummate their transaction, wherein each contraparty is notified of the match at the same time, and no contraparty receives notice of the match before another contraparty.

79. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of an equity security.

80. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a debt security.

81. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a derivative security.

82. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein at least one of the received

indications of interest contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.

83. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.

84. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

85. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred in said comparing step but which is transmitted to a matched contraparty during said consummating the transaction step to assist in consummation by the contraparties.

86. (Previously presented) The method of claim 82, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any price per unit limits established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor are satisfied.

87. (Previously presented) The method of claim 83, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable total values of the transaction established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, are satisfied.

88. (Previously presented) The method of claim 84, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable number of units established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, is satisfied.

89. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step unless all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

90. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step even though all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

91. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferee is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferee makes a good faith deposit.

92. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein an indication of interest from a potential transferor is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferor makes a minimum firm commitment.

93. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, further comprising the step of reporting the consummation and terms of the transaction to the central processing system.

94. (Currently amended) An information management system for confidentially determining contraparties to a transaction and informing them and/or their agents of a match in order to allow them to consummate the transaction, comprising: means for receiving indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the indications of interest are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system, said indications of interest representing non-firm expressions of potential interest in making a transaction; means for confidentially and anonymously comparing the received indications of interest from potential transferees and potential transferors to determine whether a match has occurred, and thus whether contraparties to a transaction have been identified; and means for informing identified contraparties that a match has occurred between the contraparties so that further action may be taken by the contraparties to consummate their mutually desired transaction, wherein the information management system informs each contraparty of the match at the same time, and no contraparty is informed of the match before another contraparty.

95. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of an equity security.

96. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a debt security.

97. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest involves the transfer of a derivative security.

98. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.

99. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.

100. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

101. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein at least one of the received indications of interest includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred, but which is transmitted to a matched contraparty to assist in consummation by the contraparties.

102. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein said means for providing contact includes providing contact directly between the contraparties.

103. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor unless all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

104. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor even though all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the indication of interest entered by the potential transferor.

105. (Currently amended) A secure system for the trading of transferable commodities, including: a network, including a secure station and a plurality of remote user locations having respective user identities and communicatively linked to the secure station for data transmission between the secure station and the user locations; a memory at the secure station for storing user data and for storing transaction data in the form of multiple prospective transaction entries received from the user locations, each of the entries including a non-firm transferable item indication of interest and a transaction side indication identifying one of two opposing transaction sides; a search component operatively coupled to the memory, said search component performing a comparison of the stored entries with respect to the transferable item indications and the transaction side indications and, based on said comparison, to select sets of two or more of the stored entries as matching entries having the same transferable item indication and together including transaction side indications identifying the opposing transaction sides; a message sending component operatively coupled to the search component and to the memory

and, in response to the selection of each said set of matching entries, generating a prospective transaction message including the transaction indication corresponding to each of the matching entries, and further providing the prospective transaction message to the user locations associated with said corresponding user identities, wherein the secure system notifies each user identity associated with the matching entry of the match at the same time, and no user identity associated with the matching entry receives notice of the match before another user identity associated with the matching entry, thus to enable the users associated with the user locations to complete a transaction involving the transferable item; and a data security component for preventing knowledge of any given prospective transaction entry, even if unmatched, stored in the memory except by (i) the user identity corresponding to the given entry; and (ii) the user identities corresponding to the other entries in any of said sets of entries that includes the given entry.

106. (Previously presented) The system of claim 105 wherein: said message sending component provides the prospective transaction message substantially simultaneously to the user locations associated with said corresponding user identities.

107. (Previously presented) The system of claim 105 further including: a menu for enabling users to select transferable item indications corresponding to different types of transferable items.

108. (Previously presented) The system of claim 107 wherein: said menu is stored in the memory.

109. (Previously presented) The system of claim 105 wherein: the data security component includes a plurality of user pages maintained at the secure station, each of the user pages being associated with and accessible only by one of the users.

110. (Previously presented) The system of claim 105 wherein: each of the prospective transaction entries includes a further indication selected from a group of further indications consisting of: an amount indication designating an amount of the transferable item corresponding to the transferable item indication; a price indication designating an acceptable price or an acceptable price range; and a time limit indication.

111. (Previously presented) The system of claim 110 wherein the further indication is an amount indication, and further includes: an apportionment component, responsive to the selection of a set of matching entries that includes at least two entries having the same transaction side, for apportioning the designated amount of the transferable item among the user identities corresponding to the given transaction side.

112. (Previously presented) The system of claim 110 wherein: the memory includes an active

segment for storing prospective transaction entries with none of said further indications and for storing entries including further indications that are satisfied; and a suspended segment for storing prospective transaction entries including a further indication which is not satisfied; wherein the secure station further includes an entry monitoring component operatively associated with the active and suspended segments, for repeatedly monitoring the entries that include a further indication, to determine whether that further indication is satisfied; and wherein said search component performs said comparison only upon the entries stored in the active segment of the memory.

113. (Previously presented) The system of claim 112 wherein: the memory further includes a pending segment for storing prospective transaction entries designated as pending by the corresponding users, and a means for shifting an entry from the pending segment to the active segment responsive to a signal from the corresponding user location activating the entry.

114. (Previously presented) The system of claim 105 further including: a status designation component enabling each user to alternatively designate a prospective transaction entry as active or pending; wherein the memory includes an active memory segment for storing entries designated active, and an inactive segment for storing entries designated as pending; and means for transferring an entry from one of said segments to the other in response to a change in the designation.

115. (Currently amended) A process for the trading of transferable commodities, including: receiving, from a plurality of remote user locations, user information including user identities, and transaction information in the form of prospective transaction entries, each of the entries including a non-firm transferable item indication of interest and a transaction side indication identifying one of two opposing transaction sides; storing the user information and the prospective transaction entries to a memory; searching the memory to perform a comparison of the stored entries with respect to the transferable item indications and the transaction side indications; based on said comparison, selecting matching entries to form sets of two or more of the matching entries having the same transferable item indication and together including transaction side indications identifying the opposing transaction sides; in response to selecting each of the sets of entries, generating a prospective transaction message including the transaction indication corresponding to each of the matching entries, and providing the prospective transaction message to the user locations associated with the corresponding user identities, notifying each user identity associated with the matching entry of the match at the same time, with no user identity associated with the matching entry receiving notice of the match before another user identity associated with the matching entry, thereby to enable the associated users to pursue a completion of a transaction involving the transferable item; and preventing knowledge of any given prospective transaction entry, even if unmatched, stored in the memory except by

(i) the user identity corresponding to the given entry; and (ii) the user identities corresponding to the other entries in any of said sets of entries that includes the given entry.

116. (Previously presented) The process of claim 115 wherein: said providing the prospective transaction message includes providing said message substantially simultaneously to the user locations associated with the corresponding user identities.

117. (Previously presented) The process of claim 115 further including: prior to receiving the prospective transaction entries from a given user, authorizing the given user based on the given user's meeting of predetermined qualification requirements.

118. (Previously presented) The process of claim 115 wherein: said restricting access includes maintaining at the secure location a plurality of user pages, each user page personalized to and accessible only by an associated one of the user locations.

119. (Previously presented) The process of claim 115 wherein each of the prospective transaction entries further optionally includes a condition, and the process further includes: identifying the prospective transaction entries that includes a condition, and monitoring each of the entries so identified to determine whether the associated condition is satisfied.

120. (Previously presented) The process of claim 115 wherein: at least a portion of the prospective transaction entries include an amount indication associated with the transferable item indication, and the process further includes: responsive to the selection of a set that includes at least two entries with the same transaction side indication, apportioning the transferable item among the users indicating said same side of the transaction.

121. (Currently amended) A method for anonymously and confidentially determining contraparties to a transaction and notifying the contraparties in order to allow them to consummate a transaction, comprising the steps of: receiving prospective transaction entries from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the prospective transaction entries are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system, each prospective transaction entry involving a transfer of a specific item; anonymously comparing prospective transaction entries received from potential transferees with prospective transaction entries from potential transferors within the central processing system to determine whether a match has occurred; determining contraparties to a transaction based on said determination of whether a match has occurred; and notifying each of the contraparties to a transaction that a match has occurred between the contraparties so that the contraparties may consummate their transaction, wherein each contraparty is notified of the match at the same time, and no contraparty receives notice of the match before another

contraparty.

122. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries involves the transfer of an equity security.

123. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries involves the transfer of a debt security.

124. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries involves the transfer of a derivative security.

125. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.

126. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.

127. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

128. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred in said comparing step but which is transmitted to a matched contraparty during said consummating the transaction step to assist in consummation by the contraparties.

129. (Previously presented) The method of claim 125, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any price per unit limits established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor are satisfied.

130. (Previously presented) The method of claim 126, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step unless any minimum acceptable total values of the transaction established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, are satisfied.

131. (Previously presented) The method of claim 127, wherein a match between a potential transferee and a potential transferor is not determined to have occurred in said comparing step

unless any minimum acceptable number of units established by each of the potential transferee and the potential transferor, respectively, is satisfied.

132. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step unless all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferor.

133. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor in said comparing step even though all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferor.

134. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein a prospective transaction entry from a potential transferee is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferee makes a good faith deposit.

135. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, wherein a prospective transaction entry from a potential transferor is not received into the central processing system unless the potential transferor makes a minimum firm commitment.

136. (Previously presented) The method of claim 121, further comprising the step of reporting the consummation and terms of the transaction to the central processing system.

137. (Currently amended) An information management system for confidentially determining counterparties to a transaction and informing them and/or their agents of a match in order to allow them to consummate the transaction, comprising: means for receiving prospective transaction entries from potential transferees and potential transferors into a central processing system wherein the prospective transaction entries are received from an order management system integrated with the central processing system; means for confidentially and anonymously comparing the received prospective transaction entries from potential transferees and potential transferors to determine whether a match has occurred, and thus whether counterparties to a transaction have been identified; and means for informing identified counterparties that a match has occurred between the counterparties so that further action may be taken by the counterparties to consummate their mutually desired transaction, wherein the information management system informs each counterparty of the match at the same time, and no counterparty is informed of the match before another counterparty.

138. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries involves the transfer of an equity security.

139. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries involves the transfer of a debt security.

140. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries involves the transfer of a derivative security.

141. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries contains a limit as to the acceptable price per unit of the specific item that is the subject of its associated transaction.

142. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable total value of its associated transaction.

143. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries contains a limit as to the minimum acceptable number of units to be transferred in connection with a transaction.

144. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein at least one of the received prospective transaction entries includes ancillary information not used in determining whether a match has occurred, but which is transmitted to a matched contraparty to assist in consummation by the counterparties.

145. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein said means for providing contact includes providing contact directly between the counterparties.

146. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein a match is not determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor unless all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferee matches all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferor.

147. (Previously presented) The system of claim 137, wherein a match is determined to have occurred between a potential transferee and a potential transferor even though all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferee do not match all input fields making up the prospective transaction entry entered by the potential transferor.

148. (Currently amended) A secure system for the trading of transferable commodities,

including: a network, including a secure station and a plurality of remote user locations having respective user identities and communicatively linked to the secure station for data transmission between the secure station and the user locations; a memory at the secure station for storing user data and for storing transaction data in the form of multiple prospective transaction entries received from the user locations, each of the entries including a transferable item element and a transaction side element identifying one of two opposing transaction sides; a search component operatively coupled to the memory, said search component performing a comparison of the stored entries with respect to the transferable item elements and the transaction side elements and, based on said comparison, to select sets of two or more of the stored entries as matching entries having the same transferable item element and together including transaction side elements identifying the opposing transaction sides; a message sending component operatively coupled to the search component and to the memory and, in response to the selection of each said set of matching entries, generating a prospective transaction message including the transaction element corresponding to each of the matching entries, and further providing the prospective transaction message to the user locations associated with said corresponding user identities, wherein the secure system notifies each user identity associated with the matching entry of the match at the same time, and no user identity associated with the matching entry receives notice of the match before another user identity associated with the matching entry, thus to enable the users associated with the user locations to complete a transaction involving the transferable item; and a data security component for preventing knowledge of any given prospective transaction entry, even if unmatched, stored in the memory except by (i) the user identity corresponding to the given entry; and (ii) the user identities corresponding to the other entries in any of said sets of entries that includes the given entry.

149. (Previously presented) The system of claim 148 wherein: said message sending component provides the prospective transaction message substantially simultaneously to the user locations associated with said corresponding user identities.

150. (Previously presented) The system of claim 148 further including: a menu for enabling users to select transferable item elements corresponding to different types of transferable items.

151. (Previously presented) The system of claim 150 wherein: said menu is stored in the memory.

152. (Previously presented) The system of claim 148 wherein: the data security component includes a plurality of user pages maintained at the secure station, each of the user pages being associated with and accessible only by one of the users.

153. (Previously presented) The system of claim 148 wherein: each of the prospective transaction entries includes a further element selected from a group of further elements

consisting of: an amount element designating an amount of the transferable item corresponding to the transferable item element; a price element designating an acceptable price or an acceptable price range; and a time limit element.

154. (Previously presented) The system of claim 153 wherein the further element is an amount element, and further includes: an apportionment component, responsive to the selection of a set of matching entries that includes at least two entries having the same transaction side, for apportioning the designated amount of the transferable item among the user identities corresponding to the given transaction side.

155. (Previously presented) The system of claim 153 wherein: the memory includes an active segment for storing prospective transaction entries with none of said further elements and for storing entries including further elements that are satisfied; and a suspended segment for storing prospective transaction entries including a further element which is not satisfied; wherein the secure station further includes an entry monitoring component operatively associated with the active and suspended segments, for repeatedly monitoring the entries that include a further element, to determine whether that further element is satisfied; and wherein said search component performs said comparison only upon the entries stored in the active segment of the memory.

156. (Previously presented) The system of claim 155 wherein: the memory further includes a pending segment for storing prospective transaction entries designated as pending by the corresponding users, and a means for shifting an entry from the pending segment to the active segment responsive to a signal from the corresponding user location activating the entry.

157. (Previously presented) The system of claim 148 further including: a status designation component enabling each user to alternatively designate a prospective transaction entry as active or pending; wherein the memory includes an active memory segment for storing entries designated active, and an inactive segment for storing entries designated as pending; and means for transferring an entry from one of said segments to the other in response to a change in the designation.

158. (Currently amended) A process for the trading of transferable commodities, including: receiving, from a plurality of remote user locations, user information including user identities, and transaction information in the form of prospective transaction entries, each of the entries including a transferable item element and a transaction side element identifying one of two opposing transaction sides; storing the user information and the prospective transaction entries to a memory; searching the memory to perform a comparison of the stored entries with respect to the transferable item elements and the transaction side elements; based on said comparison, selecting matching entries to form sets of two or more of the matching entries having the same

transferable item element and together including transaction side elements identifying the opposing transaction sides; in response to selecting each of the sets of entries, generating a prospective transaction message including the transaction element corresponding to each of the matching entries, and providing the prospective transaction message to the user locations associated with the corresponding user identities, notifying each user identity associated with the matching entry of the match at the same time, with no user identity associated with the matching entry receiving notice of the match before another user identity associated with the matching entry, thereby to enable the associated users to pursue a completion of a transaction involving the transferable item; and preventing knowledge of any given prospective transaction entry, even if unmatched, stored in the memory except by (i) the user identity corresponding to the given entry; and (ii) the user identities corresponding to the other entries in any of said sets of entries that includes the given entry.

159. (Previously presented) The process of claim 158 wherein: said providing the prospective transaction message includes providing said message substantially simultaneously to the user locations associated with the corresponding user identities.

160. (Previously presented) The process of claim 158 further including: prior to receiving the prospective transaction entries from a given user, authorizing the given user based on the given user's meeting of predetermined qualification requirements.

161. (Previously presented) The process of claim 158 wherein: said restricting access includes maintaining at the secure location a plurality of user pages, each user page personalized to and accessible only by an associated one of the user locations.

162. (Previously presented) The process of claim 158 wherein each of the prospective transaction entries further optionally includes a condition, and the process further includes: identifying the prospective transaction entries that includes a condition, and monitoring each of the entries so identified to determine whether the associated condition is satisfied.

163. (Previously presented) The process of claim 158 wherein: at least a portion of the prospective transaction entries include an amount indication associated with the transferable item element, and the process further includes: responsive to the selection of a set that includes at least two entries with the same transaction side element, apportioning the transferable item among the users having said same side of the transaction.